and Hopei (Chihli) corner on one another, in the extraordinarily productive Red Basin in the center of Szechwan, and around Canton, where favorable harbors and rich bottom lands encourage trade and agriculture. Other congested centers are along the coast of Fukien and Chekiang and in and around the Wuhan cities in Hupeh. In some of the most thickly settled regions the number of farmers eking out an existence on a square mile of land rivals that of any other section of the world.

The necessary inaccuracy which is the despair of all who wish exact figures for to-day bedevils all attempts to estimate the numbers of Chinese in existence in earlier centuries The Chinese Government has taken enumerations many times. This was an almost inevitable accompaniment of the levying of taxation and of the recruiting of armies. As a rule, however, the returns gave only the totals by households or adults. Even in these the percentage of error was probably high, if for no other reason than because of the desire of individuals to avoid taxation or military service and of officials to juggle the figures for their own benefit. Even if the summaries were accurate, the problem of determining from them the total population would remain. Moreover, the areas included are not always the same. The results of the several attempts which have been made to estimate what the population of the Empire was at various periods must, then, be regarded as conjectures which may be very far removed from the truth.

Ma Tuan-lin, a distinguished scholar who flourished in the thirteenth century A.D., is responsible for the statement that in the ninth century B.C. a census gave 13.7 million peuons between

the ages of fifteen and sixty-five as living north of the Yangtze River, and an estimate based upon his report declares that the total population of this area was then 21.7 millions. Ma Tuan-lin gives the results of ten enumerations of the population taken between A.D. 2 and 155. The average of the ten, reduced to individuals (on a conjectural scale which may be greatly in error), is 63.5 millions, varying from 83.6 millions, the first, to 29.1 millions, the fifth, the great differences being ascribed to civil war and to incomplete returns. Probably, too, the areas measured were not exactly the same. In A.D. 280, after long strife, the population is put at 23.1 millions, and in 606 at 46 millions.